

Full Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Work in Leicester City

An inspection led by HMI Probation



Foreword

This inspection of youth offending work in Leicester City is one of a small number of full joint inspections that we are undertaking annually with colleagues from the criminal justice, social care, health and learning and skills inspectorates.

We chose to inspect Leicester City Youth Offending Service (YOS) primarily because their performance showed that reoffending was higher than local and national averages and that offending by Looked After Children was high. The investigation into this by the YOS would suggest that the information supplied to the Youth Justice Board was incorrect, resulting in a higher than actual figure.

The reoffending rate for Leicester City was 39.2%, a slight drop from the previous year but higher than the national average of 37.9%¹.

This inspection showed that Leicester City YOS is performing satisfactorily in all key areas. Indeed, we found strengths in the way in which children and young people are engaged and about the support they receive to access education, training and employment. The YOS Management Board knows it still has work to do, especially in reducing reoffending, and has invested in the provision of interventions to try and tackle some entrenched thinking, behaviour and attitudes to offending. The use of the Multi-Systemic Therapy approach is showing some good early results, but we found that the existing interventions are not being used often enough.

We have made some recommendations for the Board and the Head of Service, who may wish to consider its membership and composition to ensure that all partners play a full part in assisting the YOS to reduce reoffending.

The recommendations made in this report are intended to assist Leicester City YOS in its continuing improvement by focusing on specific key areas.



Dame Glenys Stacey

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

May 2016

¹ The reoffending rate that was available during the first fieldwork was published October 2015, and was based on binary reoffending rates after 12 months for the January 2013 – December 2013 cohort. Source: Ministry of Justice.

Key judgements



Summary

Reducing reoffending

Overall work to reduce reoffending was satisfactory. Leicester City's Youth Justice Plan includes the objective to improve the quality and timeliness of assessments. This was a solid area of practice with case managers utilising a range of information to identify what contributes to offending. Work to reduce reoffending, however, is not yet having the intended impact. Managers and the YOS Management Board are in the process of trying to better understand the profile of reoffending. We found that, following on from good assessments, interventions and work to directly address offending was not consistently being delivered, reviewed or evaluated.

Protecting the public

Overall work to protect the public and actual or potential victims was satisfactory. There were effective links with other key agencies including the police, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements and probation services to manage the risk of harm to others. It was positive to note that the risks that some children and young people posed to their siblings was considered. Work to protect others from violence within intimate relationships (domestic violence) was not always strong enough.

Protecting children and young people

Overall work to protect children and young people and reduce their vulnerability was satisfactory. In the majority of cases YOS workers understood how children and young people were vulnerable, either through their own actions or because of other people.

Ensuring that the sentence is served

Overall work to ensure that the sentence was served was good. Children and young people were overwhelmingly positive about the support they received from YOS workers. YOS workers were persistent and tenacious in their attempts to engage them and understand how their life experiences contributed to offending, risk to others and their vulnerability.

Governance and partnerships

Overall, the effectiveness of governance and partnership arrangements was satisfactory. The Board had a good understanding of the work of the YOS and its place within the local criminal justice system. The Board, however, needed to hold all partners to account for the provision of services. The Board should have a sharper focus on how the work of the YOS prioritises offending behaviour, and how partners contribute services that can best support the reduction of offending by children and young people.

Interventions to reduce reoffending

Overall the management and delivery of interventions to reduce reoffending was satisfactory. The development of a directory of interventions was positive, as was the focus on ensuring that interventions were based on principles of effective practice that made a tangible difference to reducing reoffending. Interventions to address offending behaviour needed to be used more often and then evaluated so that the YOS had a clear understanding of what was having the greatest impact.

Recommendations

Post-inspection improvement work should focus particularly on achieving the following outcomes within 12 months following publication of this report:

The Chair of the YOS Management Board should ensure that:

1. cases that are open to children's social care services, either as a Child In Need or as part of child protection, are jointly managed to protect the individual child or young person
2. the YOS is represented at the Leicester City child sexual exploitation meetings
3. the membership and composition allows for all partners to effectively challenge performance, are involved in service design and contribute to the reduction of reoffending rates, the management of risk of harm and in protecting vulnerable children and young people.

The YOS Head of Service should ensure that:

4. management oversight is consistent and effective in ensuring that all case management work is conducted to a good standard, including the quality of records, the delivery of interventions and reviewing of work
5. all of the health needs of the children and young people who are supervised by the YOS are identified and met. This should include the physical and sexual health needs and speech, language and communication needs.

Please note – throughout this report all names referred to in the practice examples have been amended to protect the individual's identity.

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Reducing reoffending

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Theme 1: Reducing reoffending

What we expect to see

As the purpose of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children and young people we expect youth justice partners to increase the likelihood of successful outcomes by undertaking good quality assessment and planning, deliver appropriate interventions and demonstrate both positive leadership and effective management.

Case assessment score

Within the case assessment, overall 66% of work to reduce reoffending was done well enough.

Key Findings

1. The YOS management team and Board had taken to steps to understand the reoffending rates and patterns and were working hard to prevent children and young people from offending again.
2. Reoffending rates within some groups remain higher than the national average and are increasing in line with the national trend.
3. Appropriate plans to reduce reoffending had been written, based on accurate assessments of factors that contributed to offending, but these plans were not always followed through.
4. There was a very comprehensive range of interventions available to children and young people, with a lot of practical support to give them stability and access to accommodation, education, training and employment (ETE).
5. Only half of the inspected cases had been reviewed frequently enough, or in a way that helped those working with the child or young person to understand what progress was being made to reduce reoffending, to respond to significant changes or to challenge the attitude of some children or young people to their offending lifestyles.
6. Focus on addressing offending behaviour and risk of harm was sometimes overtaken by the YOS staff responding to welfare needs.
7. The quality of recording made it difficult for case managers and others to successfully track what was happening in each case.

Explanation of findings

1. Good quality pre-sentence reports (PSRs) were produced for the courts, being balanced, accurate and sufficiently analytical. Proposals were appropriate, but not always followed by the court. Court staff were generally complimentary about the way in which the YOS supported them, but felt that the relationship could be further improved with the addition of some further training for them, especially around the issues of child sexual exploitation.
2. Thorough and well researched assessments of offending related needs had been undertaken in just over 80% of the cases we inspected. It was clear when we spoke to case managers that they had taken time to understand children and young people, how they lived and the factors that could lead to offending. In the 57 cases we looked at, the two most common factors that had contributed to offending were thinking and behaviour and attitudes to offending.
3. Throughout the cases we examined, it was evident that there was a clear focus on the importance of ETE in helping children and young people desist from offending, and we saw some very good work to support individuals to return to school and college.

4. Within the YOS, there were two main groups of workers; case managers and advocates. Case managers were responsible for undertaking assessment and plans and delivering targeted offending behaviour work. The advocates offered wider support including help to maintain accommodation, help with finances and support with practical day-to-day issues. Although the job descriptions clearly differentiated the two roles, these were not always followed, with children and young people receiving different support from each worker involved in the case. In order to ensure that roles were clear and that the right work was undertaken by the right member of staff, three-way supervision should have taken place, but often it had not. This contributed to drift in some cases where offending behaviour work was not always delivered.
5. We saw some good attention being paid to children and young people who were at risk of being radicalised, including the following example of notable practice. It was, therefore, disappointing to find that the YOS police officers were not aware of some of the critical work being carried out.

Example of notable practice

A 17 year old male had begun to spend time with people known to hold radical and extreme views. Staff in his residential home noted a concerning change in his attitude and views and his longstanding mistrust of people he perceived to be in authority. He was sentenced to custody for selling drugs and his case manager took the time to form a trusting relationship with him and this led to him accessing time with an Imam who provided teaching on Islam. This input provided the young man with a counterbalance and challenge to the developing radical views he held.

6. Often, important information recorded in case diary entries was not transferred into key documents such as the Asset assessments. In a few cases, critical information about the risk that that children and young people posed to others had been missed.
7. Case recording was unclear and sometimes unhelpful. Case managers had no information about what one partner agency (offering substance misuse services) was doing. This limited their opportunity to support the child or young person or to identify if reoffending was becoming more or less imminent.
8. There was a lack of effective review in around half of the cases. The local guidance issued to case managers was that a review should have taken place every six months or when a significant change occurred. In a number of cases, however, individuals had shown signs of an increased risk of reoffending early on in their orders, but no review had been completed.
9. Just over 60% of the interventions delivered were consistent with the identified reasons for offending and plans to tackle this. In the remaining cases, interventions had either not been delivered or the recording made it very difficult to identify what work had actually been done. There was very little analysis or tracking of the impact of interventions. Only half of the interventions delivered had been reviewed to identify if they were the desired outcome.
10. We assess whether or not work had taken place with the child or young person to reduce reoffending. We saw a lot of work to support families and to improve the relationship between children and young people, and their parents/carers, but in only half of the relevant cases was this work sufficiently targeted on reducing reoffending.
11. Integrated Offender Management was well-established and well-understood. This enabled good transition to adult services. In relation to deter young offenders (DYO), we were also encouraged to see that DYO continued to be monitored after they had ceased to be managed by the YOS. This meant that an escalation of criminal behaviour could be identified and tackled at an early stage. This was good practice.

12. An out of court disposal meeting considered community resolutions, cautions and conditional cautions. The panel could be expanded to include other partners, for instance, the substance misuse provider, thus providing an opportunity to consider a range of interventions and set these in motion straight away.
13. There was, however, no panel in place to decide whether it was appropriate to charge a child or young person. Considering the serious impact of a charge for a child or young person, and the increased workload on the YOS and other criminal justice agencies, establishing such a panel would be a sensible extension to the decision-making process. Indeed, it was notable that a number of charged cases had been sent back by the youth court as it was felt that there could have been a more appropriate disposal option.
14. We identified most progress in the areas of ETE, living arrangements and alcohol misuse, with the least progress in the child or young person's motivation to change, emotional and mental health and attitudes to offending. In part, the lack of progress is because of the complex needs of many of the children and young people the YOS supervises. It also highlights the need for the YOS to refocus case management on offending and risk of harm issues, and on how it works with partner agencies in developing complementary but distinct support.

Quotes from children and young people: The following quotes show where individuals' views and situations have been understood and responded to.

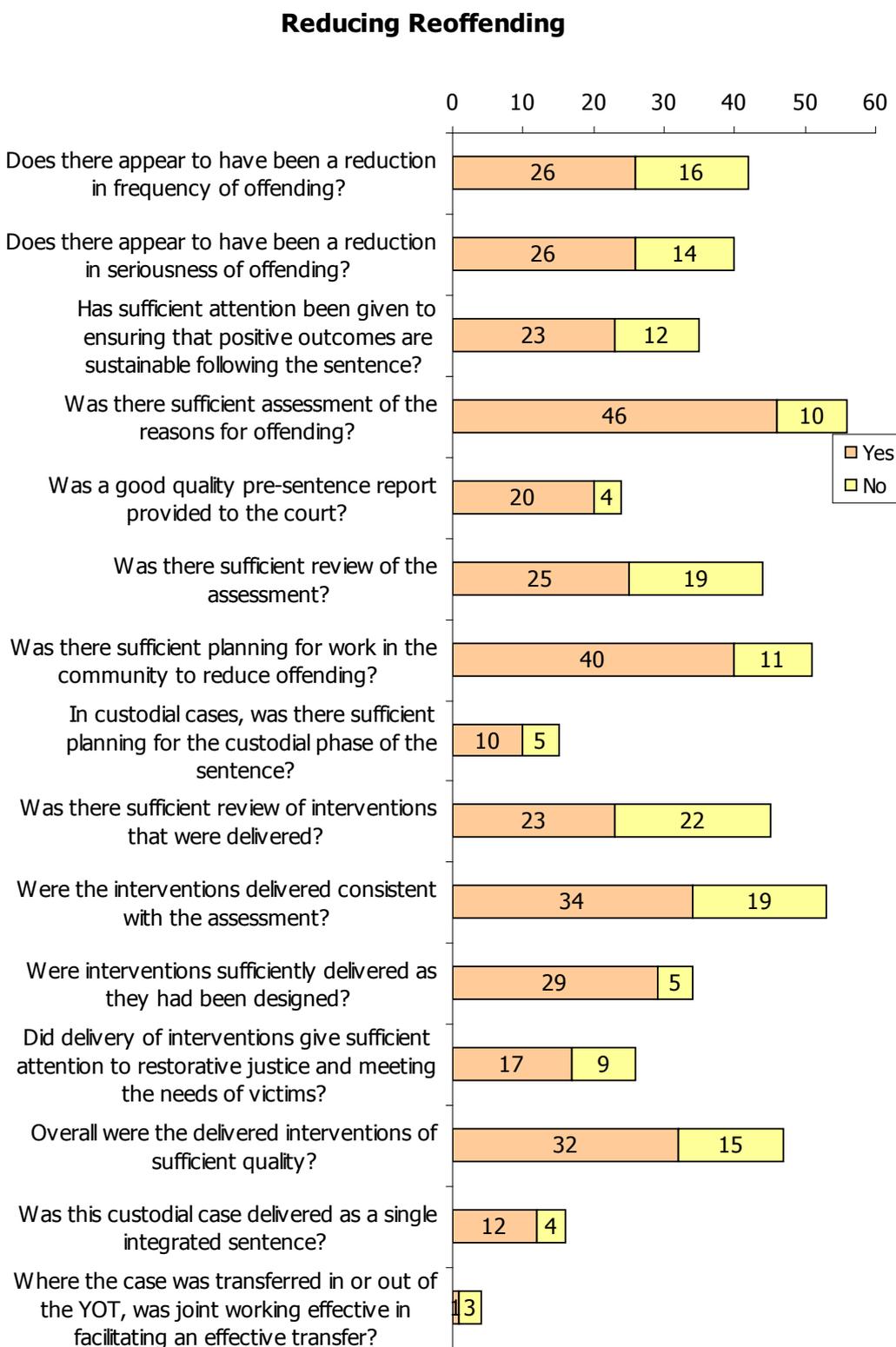
"When, I thought I was going to do things that I shouldn't do again, they helped by sitting down and speaking with me they have always supported me around it and if there is something wrong then they will help you through it, in ways that other people can't."

"Sometimes when I finish work [caseworker] will pick me up from work and take me home so that he can have a chat with my dad and that, so my family feel involved. They chat about how things are going, I don't mind cause it's useful, cause my dad is able to get his views across too. I'm quite close with my dad so it hasn't affected our relationship."

"When I was released, they sent me to live miles away from my family, it really annoyed me but YOS arranged for me to be moved closer, now I am only 10 mins away."

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 57 cases were inspected. The total answers, however, may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]



Protecting the public

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Theme 2: Protecting the public

What we expect to see

Victims, and potential victims, of crime have the right to expect that everything reasonable is done to manage the risk of harm posed by children and young people who have offended. We expect to see good quality assessment and planning with the delivery of appropriate interventions, and positive leadership, effective management and partnership work which reduces the risk of harm to others.

Case assessment score

Within the case assessment, overall 68% of work to protect the public was done well enough.

Key Findings

1. Good systems were in place to manage those children and young people who posed the greatest risk of serious harm to others through effective joint work with others, including the police and probation.
2. Not all victims felt that they had been kept informed about what was happening quickly enough.
3. Work to protect actual and potential victims of domestic violence and abuse was underdeveloped.
4. Reviews of the risk of harm to others were not always thorough or happening often enough.
5. There were a good range of interventions to help minimise the risk of harm that a child or young person posed, however, they were not always used as planned.

Explanation of findings

1. PSRs included a thorough and clear explanation of the risk of harm that the child or young person posed to others.
2. There was a good joint understanding of risk issues between the YOS and many of the educational providers, resulting in children and young people being able to access services with their risk of harm to others being managed. In addition, the quality of the relationships meant that if ETE staff had information about any increase in risk issues, then these would be shared with the YOS case managers.
3. A sufficient assessment of the risk of harm that a child or young person posed had been undertaken in 40 of the 55 relevant cases (73%). Where the assessment had not been sufficient, the reasons included five cases where the risk of harm classification was too high, four cases where no risk assessment had been completed and four cases where the risk to potential victims was not considered. In these cases, the risk of domestic violence had either been missed or underestimated.
4. There was a sufficient review of risk of harm to others in just over half of the cases where it was needed. In some cases, the review was a copy of the previous assessment and did not include new information and, in others, a review had not taken place at all. This included cases where a manager had specifically requested action.
5. Risk management in custody was good in over three-quarters of the relevant cases. Plans to manage the risks to others in the community were less good (sufficient in 34 of the 50 relevant cases - 68%). Those that were judged insufficient often lacked a robust contingency plan.
6. A number of the children and young people we consulted as part of the inspection had undertaken some work on victim awareness; nine of the ten children and young people had found that this has had

an impact on them. This was supported by the views expressed by parents/carers who were able to give examples of how their children and young people had been able to see what had happened from a different perspective.

7. There was evidence of good partnership working between the YOS and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) with suitable referrals being made. It was positive to see that the YOS had access to ViSOR², however, this is not currently being utilised and relevant training, and access to ViSOR by the YOS police officers, would improve the information flow and subsequent recording.
8. As we saw in work to reduce reoffending, planned interventions to manage risk of harm to others had not always been started or completed. We assessed that the required interventions to manage risk of harm had not been delivered in 15 of the 45 cases where it was needed, despite it being planned.
9. Where there was an identifiable, actual or potential victim, risk of harm was sufficiently managed in 26 cases, leaving 12 cases where they were not fully protected. In these cases the necessary work had not been undertaken by the YOS.
10. Some of the victims were very positive about the support they received and some felt that communication from the YOS could have been better.

Quotes from victims of children and young people who have offended

"My experience has been pretty positive, it was quite a good experience, and I found it quite interesting. Yeah a positive outcome so I think that's quite good overall."

"I am really chuffed with the support I have got, albeit late, the support I received was absolutely brilliant."

"I found mine quite negative, because it's all about communication for me or lack of it. I didn't know what was happening or when it was happening. I could have done with more information to take away because when I had my meeting I was given a lot of information and I had to rely on memory to remember what was happening."

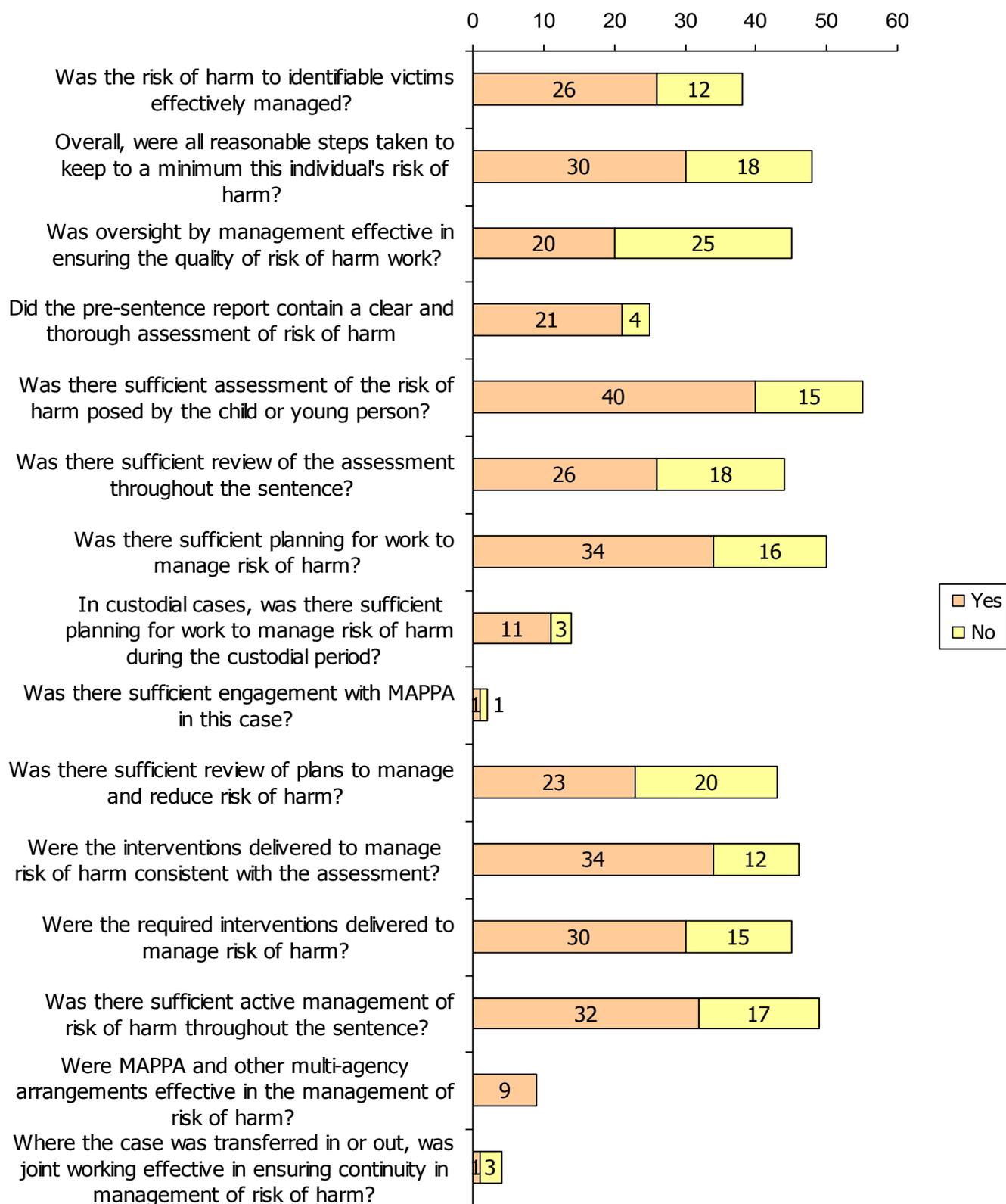
"I think contact should be made quicker but it's not been a positive nor a negative experience it's been an experience."

² ViSOR is a national confidential database that supports MAPPA. It facilitates the effective sharing of information and intelligence on violent and sexual offenders between the three MAPPA Responsible Authorities (police, probation and prisons).

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 57 cases were inspected. The total answers, however, may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]

Protecting the Public



Protecting the child or young person

3

Theme 3: Protecting the child or young person

What we expect to see

Whether the vulnerability of children and young people is due to the consequences of their own behaviour or the behaviour of others, we expect to see that they are kept safe and their vulnerability is reduced. This should be through good quality assessment and planning with the delivery of appropriate interventions, positive leadership and management, and an effective contribution to multi-agency child protection arrangements.

Case assessment score

Within the case assessment, overall 71% of work to protect children and young people and reduce their vulnerability was done well enough.

Key Findings

1. There was a clear understanding within the city council of the vulnerability of the YOS children and young people and a strong focus on improving their life chances.
2. Assessments of the child or young person's vulnerability were sufficient in 80% of cases.
3. Good joint work was seen with the leaving care team, however, some cases held within the Child In Need team were not sufficiently managed well enough and some children were not getting the services they needed.
4. The roles and responsibilities of the YOS and other professionals involved in cases needed clearer definition.
5. The child sexual exploitation and missing from home strategies are developing; the YOS is not routinely involved in all meetings.
6. The safety and well-being of children and young people is seen as a priority for YOS staff and they offer ongoing support. There was a lack of clarity about the overlap of YOS plans and Child In Need plans.

Explanation of findings

1. Case managers had access to a range of information to inform assessments of safeguarding and vulnerability, including independent access to Liquid Logic, the children's services recording system. Most case managers understood the effect of childhood trauma on children and young people and sought to ensure that they were kept safe.
2. It was positive to see that the impact of offending behaviour on siblings within the family was routinely assessed.
3. There was some good joint work with the 16 plus/leaving care teams, but joint work and relationships with the duty and assessment service and the Child In Need teams were more variable. On the occasions where the YOS disagreed with the level of service being offered, this was not always escalated.
4. There was sufficient planning in place in 70% of community cases and 80% of custody cases. Where necessary, just over half of the cases had been sufficiently reviewed (23 of 43). In ten cases there had been no review at all and in six, when the review had taken place, the plans had not been amended.
5. In three-quarters of cases, interventions to address safeguarding and vulnerability were consistent with the identified needs and delivered in 69% of cases.

6. Gaps in the provision of physical and sexual health were noted, with referrals not always being made and the current pathway being the GP. None of the YOS staff had attended the sexual health training and those staff spoken to were unaware of the availability of the nurse at Connexions. Given the complex needs of a number of the children and young people there was no guarantee that they would attend their appointments.
7. Overall, the YOS had done enough to keep children and young people safe in 37 of the 49 cases where needed (76%). In the 12 cases where there were deficits, there was no single reason for this but factors included work not being undertaken by partners, including children's social care and health.
8. YOS staff appropriately sought advice from Leicester City's social care colleagues regarding possible referrals. Referrals to social care were timely, clear and appropriate. There were children and young people placed in Leicester City from other local authorities, who had a YOS intervention and where there were possible child sexual exploitation issues. YOS staff had helpfully identified those individuals to social care.
9. The YOS was involved appropriately, at an early stage, in child protection investigations. Staff took part in strategy discussions and meetings. Their contributions were valued. YOS staff attended child protection conferences and core groups conscientiously.
10. In some Child In Need cases, where there was YOS involvement, social care closed the case but the child or young person still had unmet needs, including distress about domestic violence or bereavement. There was insufficient clarity regarding what the YOS was asked to do regarding those unmet needs.
11. The YOS Head of Service has ensured that the YOS is represented at most of the key forums and meetings, and in doing so has ensured that the needs of this particular group of children and young people are represented.
12. Staff in the YOS were attuned to the safety needs of children and young people and had made individual arrangements about where to see them, including out of the office and use of home visits. Staff actively checked with individuals if they felt safe.
13. Those children and young people that were involved with external drug or alcohol services at the time of the inspection were positive about the impact this support has had on their attitude, behaviour and lifestyle.

Quotes from children and young people

"I was referred to Cornerstones and they are really good and actually helpful. They tell you about the risks of drugs and stuff like that, as a result of that I've not took it for such a long time."

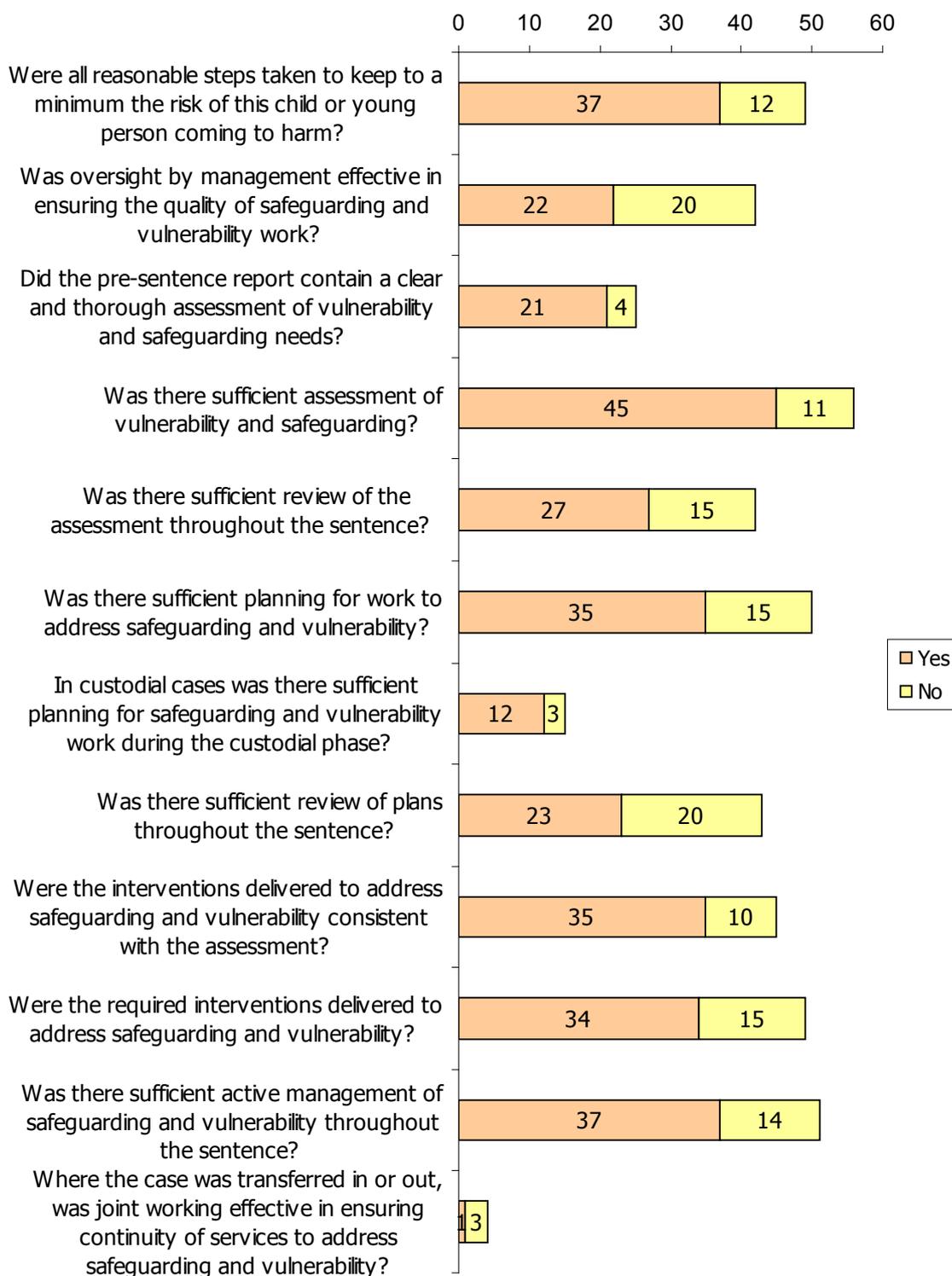
"I'm doing Cornerstones at the moment and [the] managing your own house [course]. It's called something else now but [my case manager] told me about it and signed me up. There are loads of groups on, alcohol, cannabis and there is an art group that I really like, it's really good and helpful."

"I come here every week; they helped me with drug tests and helped me with my drinking. I have tried so many times and failed but when I had the support from YOS it was a lot easier."

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 57 cases were inspected. The total answers, however, may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]

Protecting the Child or Young Person



**Ensuring that
the sentence
is served**

4

Theme 4: Ensuring that the sentence is served

What we expect to see

Children and young people should serve their sentences as the court intends. We expect that the YOS will maximise the likelihood of successful outcomes by effective engagement with them and their families, responding to relevant diversity factors including paying attention to their health and well-being, and taking appropriate action if they do not comply.

Case assessment score

Within the case assessment, overall 82% of work to ensure that the sentence was served was done well enough.

Key Findings

1. This was the YOS's strongest area of practice, with case assessments showing some excellent work to try and engage complex and difficult individuals.
2. A real strength of the work was the way in which parents/carers remained fully included in the work and progress for the duration of the order.
3. Parents/carers were included in assessments and planning, and meaningful contact was maintained throughout the order.
4. Diversity needs were known, understood and responded to.

Explanation of findings

1. There was consistent effort made to understand diversity factors and barriers to engagement. YOS staff understood the importance of the individuals' families in supporting the successful completion of orders and in reducing reoffending. As a result, there was good involvement of parents/carers in assessment and planning.
2. For those on an order, other than a referral order, children and young people and their parents/carers felt as though they were able to contribute to the plans. Those on a referral order felt less able to do so and this was due, in part, to the process in place where case managers wrote the referral order plan. This is unusual as the original process was designed so that the community panel member could agree the contract with the child or young person and their parents/carers.
3. The specific needs of girls and those from the travelling community were recognised and steps were taken to address these in a sensitive and appropriate way. Contact had been made with the traveller liaison worker when necessary.
4. In just over 80% of all cases, significant efforts had been made to help the child or young person comply with the requirements of their order, which is where we saw joint work of the advocates have real impact. In the few cases where sufficient effort had not been made to secure compliance, this was because of either a failure to motivate the individual or a case manager not establishing the correct balance between showing some flexibility and establishing clear boundaries. In a few cases, the child or young person had not been held to account for non-compliance quickly enough.

Quote from child or young person

"When I got released I didn't want to have to go to [the] YOS office and be hanging around the reception area cause obviously I knew people and it could get a bit volatile towards me, I didn't want to go. So YOS arranged it to either meet me somewhere else or the times I needed to come to the office I went straight into the room and waited on [YOS worker], it was really helpful."

5. YOS ETE partnership workers showed the same level of tenacity as YOS case managers, resulting in some very positive ETE outcomes for children and young people.
6. All children and young people interviewed believed they had a good positive relationship with their YOS workers and that they had developed effective relationships. This in turn encouraged them to comply with their sentence. During the course of the interviews, it was identified that they were particularly happy with the YOS's efforts to be understanding and honest during sessions and conversations.

Quotes from children and young people

"It's a good relationship, she is nice to me and she helps with [things] like stopping getting into fights, she just helps me and understands me."

"My caseworker is sound and always been supportive, he doesn't judge me. He sends me notifications on my phone like text messages and that and tries to keep me on the right path."

"I love my caseworker, she gets down onto my level, she will think, like me, she knows when I am upset and understands me, and even though she is older she still gets onto my level. I could ask her for anything and I know she would do it for me or she would try."

7. Parents/carers also stated that they were happy with the relationship and communication between their child or young person and the YOS worker, again underlining staff's ability to communicate effectively.

Quotes from parents/carers of children and young people

"It was all down to [YOS worker] listening to her and being there for her, because they are so down to earth, she complied with it all."

"It's all down to how she is with him; she is really good with him."

"She picks him up from school, listens to him, any problems he has she helps sort them out and he knows this so he trusts her. She really supports him, and they always have a really good chat."

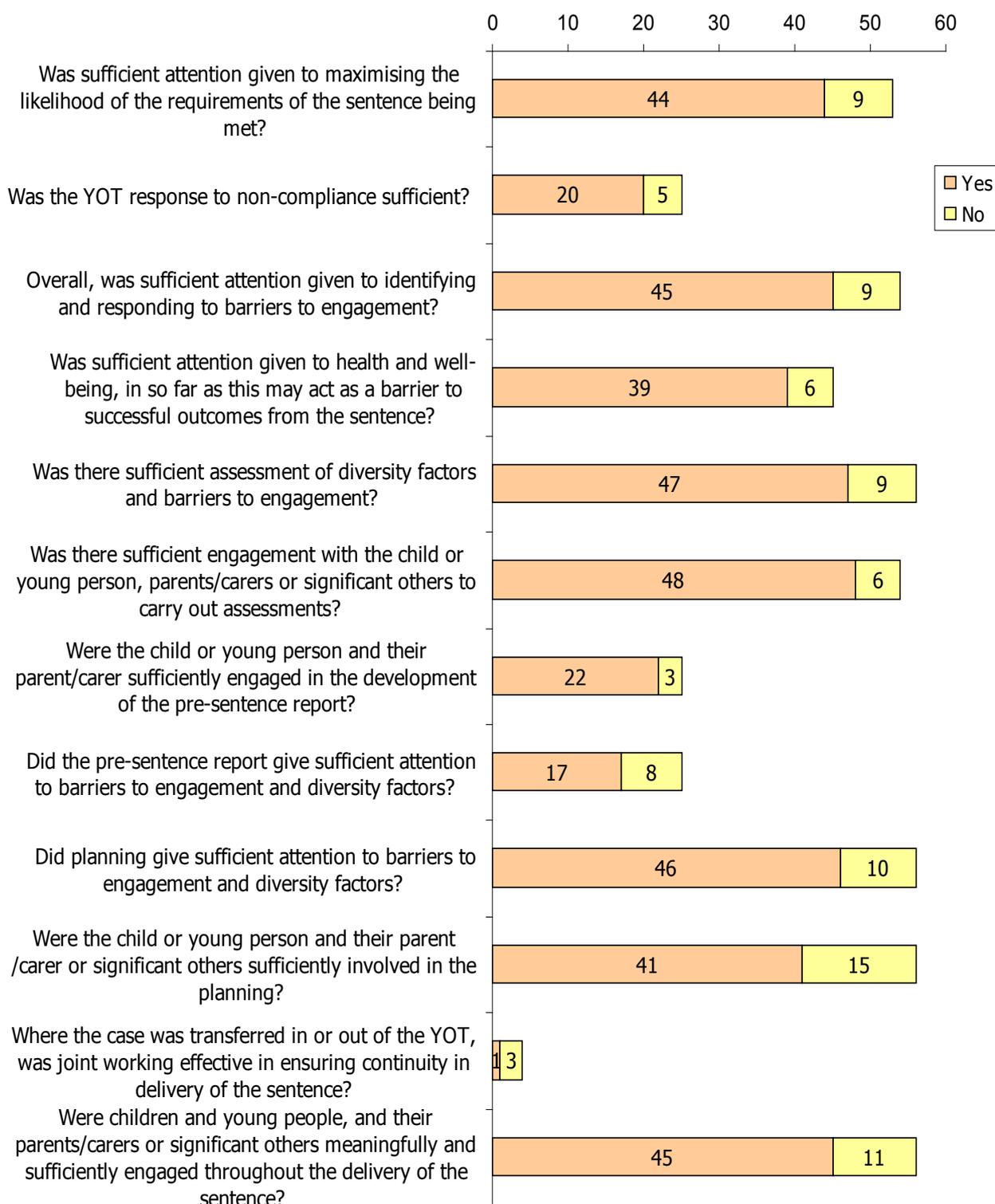
"[My child] was unable to open up and start talking but [YOS worker] has done wonders and cracked it."

"[The] YOS have been there for her and listened to her."

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 57 cases were inspected. The total answers, however, may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]

Ensuring that the Sentence is Served



Governance and partnerships

5

Theme 5: Governance and partnerships

What we expect to see

Effective governance, partnership and management arrangements are in place. These enable the YOS to meet national and local criminal justice and related objectives, and to deliver and maintain good quality services.

Key Findings

1. We judged that the management, leadership and partnership were effective.
2. The YOS Management Board does not yet have a full range of sufficient analysed data to assist with performance management against the key priorities within the Youth Justice Plan.
3. Some areas of health provision are not yet met and there is an overreliance on children and young people accessing universal services, which they find particularly difficult to do. There are difficulties in access to services to meet physical and sexual health needs.
4. The YOS is well led by the Head of Service and the operational manager.
5. Not all partners are fully challenged on their contribution to reducing reoffending.
6. The YOS Management Board and senior management team have a growing understanding of the YOS performance and, when they have focused attention onto this area, have been able to turn this into positive results. They understand the challenges in reducing reoffending and are focusing on this issue.

Explanation of findings

1. Leadership and governance – offending is reduced and other criminal justice and related objectives are met

- 1.1. The YOS Management Board is linked to the Safer Leicester Partnership. There are also good links with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The objectives of the YOS are in line with wider local criminal justice agencies.
- 1.2. The Youth Justice Plan sets out the key priorities, some of which have been achieved, including the increased use of ETE and good performance in reducing first-time entrants.
- 1.3. The key priorities for 2015/2016 include improving the quality and timeliness of interventions. As shown in previous sections of this report, there remains an issue with commencements of interventions. The Board does not currently have a method of analysing the actual commencement date of an intervention with the planned commencement date.
- 1.4. Analysis of crime trend data was not routinely presented to the YOS Board to enable them to understand offending patterns and emerging trends, and react accordingly. While there appeared to have been some discussion at the September Board meeting, it was not clear what reoffending progress had been made.
- 1.5. The availability of information in relation to child sexual exploitation was also raised at the September meeting but, again, it was not clear what actions had been requested as a result. Child sexual exploitation should be an agenda item in YOS Management Board meetings and this would assist members to focus on those at the greatest risk of harm.
- 1.6. It was not clear, despite the use of a live time-tracker, whether the Board had proper up to date information about reoffending and first-time entrant rates.

- 1.7. There was evidence of some challenge within the Board, and of partners being held to account, assisted by a clear performance management framework and examples that some issues were escalated to the Board.
- 1.8. The Board could have improved its effectiveness by ensuring it addressed identified gaps in service provision in a timely manner, for example, physical and sexual health provision for children and young people.
- 1.9. The Board is not working as well as it might or utilising all relevant data. Further challenge and planning was needed to focus on how partners' contributions assist and compliment the YOS's work to reduce reoffending, manage the risk of harm to others and to keep children and young people safe. In addition, its approach of co-opting partners to Board meetings when there are issues does not allow for them to be fully involved in service design or the overall strategic direction of the YOS.

2. Partnerships – effective partnerships make a positive difference

- 2.1. We found some robust partnership arrangements and a commitment to ensuring children and young people have access to necessary services, a focus on understanding why reoffending rates remain higher than the national average and how offending outcomes could be improved.
- 2.2. Scrutiny arrangements from the Board have been developing and there is a strong involvement from elected members to addressing youth crime.
- 2.3. Strategic leaders were engaged, a plan had been produced but priorities did not address all the evident gaps in service provision for children and young people, for example, health provision.
- 2.4. There was very little reference to safeguarding issues in the YOS Board minutes we read and no safeguarding data was provided. A Management Board development session was held in September 2015, which referenced safeguarding issues in passing but the outcome of the discussion was unclear.
- 2.5. Managers overseeing the work of the ETE coordinators were well positioned within the key services of Education Welfare Service (EWS) and Connexions. Professional working arrangements across the raft of integrated children and young people services were well-established, and communication and liaison between these and the YOS had improved significantly over the last 18 months. ETE coordinators were attending key operational meetings such as 'Target 25' and the student sharing panel, to represent the YOS and advocate appropriately for the educational and learning needs of the YOS cohort.
- 2.6. It was difficult to judge whether staffing capacity to support ETE was sufficient without direct discussion with the two ETE coordinators, who were unavailable during this inspection. Caseloads, however, were regularly reviewed at supervision, prioritised according to need and deemed by managers to be of appropriate size. The work of specialist staff such as the Connexions personal adviser and the team of educational psychologists based within the YOS increased the service's ability to identify and respond to more complex learning needs, both in custody and in the community. The work of the advocates, regularly meeting with children and young people, provided considerable and important additional support to the education team.
- 2.7. The role of Board members in holding providers of ETE work to account was underdeveloped, particularly regarding the provision for post-16 year olds. The priority of the Board to improve ETE support for high risk entrants and those who have reoffended is not disputed. There was, however, no full-time representation for ETE on the Board, so robust challenge and scrutiny of this concern was less frequent than it should have been.
- 2.8. The service manager for information, advice and guidance was a co-opted member and invited to attend periodically. Data presented to Board members was comprehensive and important information was shared about provision, placements, trends, and gaps within the training and employment sectors. Recently, data presented to the Board had identified reduced access to

vocational skills-based training, such as construction and motor vehicle maintenance programmes, and how this might have some bearing to the “*stubbornly high*” reoffending rates of the post-16 males of a white ethnic background.

- 2.9. It was unclear whether this information had been used to influence and shape provision across the broader Citywide Partnership of providers and employers. Forthcoming European Social Funding, however, will target provision for the YOS cohort and the recent drive by the city council to increase employment opportunities for young people, by enforcing new employee quotas, were very positive initiatives.
- 2.10. Health representation at the Board varies. Public health are undertaking a health needs audit but this is not due to be completed until the summer. There has not been a YOS nurse for 18 months, and when the post was filled it was paid for by the YOS. There seems to be no urgency to provide distinct services to address physical and sexual health and for speech, language and communication needs for children and young people. This is disappointing, especially given the complex needs of the children and young people the YOS are dealing with, and the possible links with child sexual exploitation. From our sample we identified five children and young people where there was a need for support from speech, language and communication services. At present, the full health needs of children and young people are unknown and the Board should address this as a matter of urgency.
- 2.11. The provision of health needs for Looked After Children is better as they are seen by their specialist nurse.

3. Workforce management – effective workforce management supports quality service delivery

- 3.1. Direct management oversight of practice was variable. While it was positive to see that managers had made entries onto the case diary, listing actions that needed to be taken to improve work on the case, these had not always been completed or followed-up.
- 3.2. The systems and processes designed to support effective case management are not being consistently applied and, as a result, the good work that is happening occurs more because of an individual’s work rather than by design.
- 3.3. Access to training for staff is inconsistent and there seems to be no method of prioritising staff training events, which staff found frustrating. Staff from partner agencies have difficulties in applying for training. Other staff reported that by the time they access the application, places have already gone.
- 3.4. The Case Management and Heritage Panel (risk and vulnerability panel) was under review. Staff expressed mixed views about its purpose and usefulness.
- 3.5. We saw a clear framework and appropriate tools to assist managers in addressing performance. Not all data, however, was readily available, for example information on Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Committee referrals and, where data was available, it was not always interrogated sufficiently. Furthermore, plans to address identified issues were not always monitored effectively and reviewed in order to support the achievement of the desired outcomes.

4. Learning organisation – learning and improvement leads to positive outcomes

- 4.1. Within the wider city council services there was evidence of a learning culture. The previously mentioned drive to improve the quality of children’s social care services was evident.
- 4.2. Within the YOS there was a mixed picture about the culture of learning. When we asked case managers how well they thought the culture of the organisation prompted learning and development, 44% felt that it did this very well, 38% felt it was a mixed picture and 19% felt that the culture of learning was not embedded well enough.

- 4.3. The YOS management team actively sought opportunities to better understand the performance of the YOS, and identified areas for improvement of which a number of examples were seen. Understandably, the focus for the city council is the improvement of children's services, but the YOS manager has taken the opportunity to tap into these improvements. The YOS Management Board needed to consider how further learning and development can be undertaken, so that the YOS staff were fully equipped to do their jobs well.
- 4.4. Training for YOS staff and partners was not consistent; numerous examples were noted, including the lack of training in child sexual exploitation for court staff and the YOS police officers. This had led to some confusion and frustration when staff did not have a consistent understanding of terminology or understanding of key issues. This in turn limited the impact of the training that had been delivered.
- 4.5. The managers had taken on learning from other inspections to improve practice, including those focused on the YOS and from inspections for other departments.
- 4.6. The YOS knew that they had more work to do, especially in relation to reducing reoffending rates. The work they had undertaken with the Youth Justice Board had been helpful, but the YOS Management Board now needed to consider the wider issues in this report to support this work.

Interventions to reduce reoffending

6

Theme 6: Interventions to reduce reoffending

What we expect to see

This module focuses specifically on interventions intended to reduce reoffending. We expect to see a broad range of quality interventions delivered well, coupled with appropriate assessments and plans which maximise the likelihood of sustainable outcomes being achieved. Effective leadership and partnership work needs to be evident in the delivery of interventions.

Case assessment score

Within the case assessment, overall 72% of work around interventions was done well enough.

Key Findings

1. Multi-Systemic Therapy and restorative justice were delivering positive outcomes for children and young people.
2. The YOS had access to a range of good quality multi-agency resources and interventions.
3. The YOS did not always ensure there was enough emphasis placed upon interventions to manage the risk of harm to others.
4. There was not enough focus on offending behaviour work designed to challenge motivation and attitude.
5. The YOS did not always review intervention plans when required or evaluate the success of the interventions it delivered.

Explanation of findings

1. Of the 57 cases we looked at, we found that staff were good at identifying and understanding barriers to engagement. Assessments, however, could be improved through developing skills in how to assess speech, language and communications issues. Only half of the case managers we interviewed had specific training in these areas.
2. Case managers had accurately assessed suitability for specific interventions in most cases, and initial planning for which interventions were to be delivered was good in almost all cases.
3. Just under two-thirds of children and young people attended interventions, consistent with initial assessments and plans, and sometimes interventions were not delivered or what was delivered was unclear.
4. Reviews of the delivery of interventions were completed in just over half of the cases, some were not done when required and others were of a poor quality. Where we did see reviews more should have been done to address attitudes, motivation and also family and personal relationships.
5. Materials and other resources used with children and young people were generally of a good quality, based on effective practice principles, and delivered as intended. We were pleased to see the regular use of restorative justice and Multi-Systemic Therapy; both were delivering good outcomes for children and young people. There were a wide range of interventions available to YOS workers, clearly collated within a resource directory. Our visit to local courts indicated that this good news story is one that needs to be shared with sentencers, who are interested in the outcomes for children and young people, and the specific work that is being carried out by the YOS.

6. We saw an appropriate balance between work to address reoffending, risk of harm and vulnerability in just under two-thirds of cases. Where the balance was not correct, there was, in most instances, insufficient focus on work to address risk of harm.
7. We judged that interventions that had been delivered reduced reoffending in over two-thirds of the cases we examined. Gaps in interventions were evident in the following areas: addressing attitudes to offending, motivation, thinking and behaviour, and interventions specifically designed to address offending behaviour.
8. Initial assessments and plans were good at identifying appropriate interventions. Children and young people were engaged in that process. What was identified, however, was not always delivered and reviews of intervention plans were not done well enough. There was not enough focus on interventions to address risk of harm and offending behaviour.
9. One of our inspectors attended and observed a range of interventions. This included a local West Indian Senior Citizens project which offered a variety of reparation placements for YOS cases, particularly to those of an Afro-Caribbean ethnic background. Children and young people had been involved in a variety of ways, such as helping in the kitchen, participating in the running of events and interacting with older people who used the day centre.

Example of notable practice

A worker at the day centre described how one young person of dual ethnicity had attended black history sessions run for service users. This had awakened an interest in their own Afro-Caribbean ethnic background and had changed the way they saw themselves, promoting more positive self-esteem and self-image.

There had clearly been a lot of pre-planning and preparation work done with both parties prior to the restorative justice conference. The young person was understandably quite nervous, but was well-supported and addressed all of the victim's questions and concerns. He offered a genuine apology for the trouble and distress he had caused to the victim and her family.

The victim was extremely satisfied with the process, the preparation, the management of the conference itself and the outcome. This was a well-prepared, well-managed piece of work which had an immediate impact and a positive outcome for both the victim and the young person.

10. We observed a restorative justice conference involving direct mediation between a young man who had stolen a car and a female victim whose vehicle had been damaged when he lost control. The conference was chaired by the YOS victim liaison officer and was also attended by the young man's YOS case manager.
11. The YOS utilised the Warning Zone life skills centre to deliver a Girl's Group Programme that focused on healthy relationships, raising awareness of child sexual exploitation, staying safe, substance misuse, as well as discussing offending behaviour. A young person who had completed the programme was unequivocal in her praise for the programme and how it had helped her change her life around, emphasising the importance of the healthy relationships sessions.
12. We saw some good work being undertaken by the YOS but it could have done more to measure the success of the interventions it delivered. Only by doing this would the YOS be able to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of its provision.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Background to the inspection

Inspection arrangements

The Full Joint Inspection (FJI) programme inspects youth offending work, predominantly in statutory community and custodial cases, in a small number of local authority areas each year.

The majority of the YOTs selected for these inspections are those whose performance – based on reoffending rates, National Youth Justice Outcome Indicators and supported by other information, such as recent inspections – is of significant concern. Periodically, we also include high performing areas to establish a benchmark of good practice.

The primary purpose of the youth justice system is to reduce offending. This is the main theme of the inspection. The other core themes are protecting the public, protecting the child or young person, ensuring the sentence is served and governance and partnerships.

Criteria

A copy of the inspection criteria is available on the HMI Probation website:

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-inspections/youth-inspection-programmes/inspecting-youth-offending-work/full-joint-inspection/>

Methodology

YOTs are informed approximately 11 working days prior to the inspection taking place.

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken on the weeks commencing:

04 January 2016 and 25 January 2016.

In the first fieldwork week we looked at a representative sample of 57 individual cases up to 12 months old, some current, others terminated. The sample included a number of those who are a high risk of harm to others, are particularly vulnerable, are young women, or are black and minority ethnic children and young people. Cases were assessed by a team of inspection staff. They examined these wherever possible with case managers, who were invited to discuss their work in-depth, explain their thinking and identify supporting evidence in the record.

We also received copies of relevant local documents.

During the week in between, the data from the case inspections was collated and a picture about the quality of the work of the YOS developed.

The second fieldwork week is the joint element of the inspection. HMI Probation was joined by colleague inspectors from police, health, social care and education. We explored the lines of enquiry which emerged from the case inspections. The leadership, management and partnership elements of the inspection were assessed, with a particular focus on reducing offending.

We also gathered the views of others, including strategic managers, staff and service users, children and young people, parents/carers and victims, and observed work taking place. Engagement with service users was undertaken on our behalf by User Voice.

At the end of the second fieldwork week we presented our findings to local strategic managers, the YOS Management Team, YOS staff and other interested parties.

Scoring Approach

Details of how our inspection judgements are made can be found on our website.

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-inspections/youth-inspection-programmes/inspecting-youth-offending-work/full-joint-inspection/>

Publication arrangements

A draft report is sent to the YOS for comment three weeks after the inspection, with publication approximately six weeks later. In addition, a copy goes to the relevant Ministers, other inspectorates, the Ministry of Justice Policy Group and the YJB. Copies are made available to the press and placed on our website.

FJI reports in Wales are published in both Welsh and English.

Further details about how these inspections are conducted can be found on our website in the document 'Framework for FJI Inspection Programme' at:

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-inspections/youth-inspection-programmes/inspecting-youth-offending-work/full-joint-inspection/>

Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice

Information on the role of HMI Probation and our Code of Practice can be found on our website:

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation

The Inspectorate is a public body. Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

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Appendix 2 - Acknowledgements

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